APOSTOLIC TEACHING.

A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

CONGREGATION OF THE SMYRNA CHURCH,

OF

SAVANNAH RIVER ASSOCIATION,

FIRST SABBATH, SEPTEMBER, 1833.

By WILLIAM J. GREEN,
PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

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The Undersigned being appointed a Committee to publish the Discourse on the following pages, assures the Christian Public that they are actuated from good motives, believing that the interest of Christ's Church will be thereby served materially. This Sermon would never have been written out for the press, if it had not been called for, by a number of persons of high respectability and competent judgment, who are members of no Church. The Committee think the views and principles set forth are strictly in accordance with Apostolic teaching and practice. We will not presume to anticipate the reception this Discourse may meet with, from the pious public; but of this we are certain, that the effect on the Congregation before whom it was delivered, was absorbing to an agonizing degree.

RICHARD A. BRYAN,
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} *Publishing Committee.*

October 20, 1838.

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DISCOURSE.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through his name."—*John*, 20 c., xxx, xxxi. v.

STRANGE is the condition in which Providence has placed the believer; he is ever walking (with regard to the knowledge of this world) in the midst of darkness and obscurity: but to the believer himself, all is light, so far as he is enabled to exercise faith upon the testimonies given by inspired men. Does he wish to ascertain the truth, which is the object of his faith? It is founded on facts, and in order to be assured of these facts, he must force his way backward through more than eighteen centuries; he must dig truth and falsehood out of the rubbish of tradition, out of the captious systems of the enemies of christianity—nay, sometimes out of pious frauds, on which an indiscreet zeal has attempted to establish it; he must plunge himself into periods that are gone by; he must walk by faith and not by sight. It is necessary that his persuasion, if I may so express myself, should form a new creation of things, which will open to his mind all that is necessary for his happiness in this world, or that which is to come. Being thus persuaded, he does not listen to the sophistry of men, but continually applies himself to the study of truth, and in doing this, he takes no other guide but the volume of inspiration, which he knows is able to make him wise unto salvation.

St. John, in presenting his testimony to his brethren and to all succeeding generations, acted in perfect conformity with the instructions and examples of his Blessed Master, and of all who were engaged in publishing the glad tidings of salvation to a dying world. In the twentieth chapter of the Gospel recorded by St. John, of which our text forms a part, it being the closing part of his written testimony, he sums up all those interesting facts and circumstances in connection with the resurrection of the Blessed Redeemer, and tells us that they are written that we might believe.

and that believing we might have life through his name: for without such a witness as this, all our hopes of pardon and justification before God would all be vain and delusory: for if Christ be not risen, we are yet in our sins, and are found false-witnesses of God: for we have testified that God raised him from the dead. Thus St. John commenced his narrative of this interesting case, by saying the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalen, early, when it was yet dark, to the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Here, my brethren, we should learn a lesson. Mary came early to the sepulchre, and we too should be early to our duties, especially on the first day of the week, which is rendered glorious on account of the resurrection of the Saviour. The effect which was produced upon the mind of this woman, betrays the weakness of her faith in the words of her Divine Master, while he was yet with his disciples—for he had said that he must be crucified and slain, and that he would rise again the third day; but such seems to have been the darkness of the mind of Mary, as well as the other disciples, that they could not fully comprehend the meaning of the sayings of their Master. But notwithstanding their dullness of spiritual apprehension, there had been sufficient impressions made on their minds to cause them partly to believe and partly to remain in doubt, respecting the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth; as an evidence of the truth of this remark, take notice of Mary's conduct, she runs to Peter and that other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter and that other disciple were moved by the saying of the woman; they immediately ran to the sepulchre, giving evidence of their confusion—not bearing in their minds the precious words of their Blessed Redeemer, who had often instructed them, and but a short time before had told them that it was expedient or necessary that he should go away, but if he went away he would come again unto them and receive them to himself; but when they came to the sepulchre, Peter entered immediately, and saw the linen clothes and the napkin that was about his head, folded up and lying in a place by itself: then that other disciple went in also and he saw and believed; so when these two disciples had seen all these things, they departed and went to their own home, but Mary still lingered about the sepulchre, not willing to return till she had satisfied herself, glancing her weeping eyes again into the sepulchre, she saw two Angels in shining raiment, sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had

lain. The Angels addressed her in familiar language and said, woman why weepest thou? Her answer still shows the confusion of her mind: they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. At that instant she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Jesus. She supposing him to be the gardner, said unto him, sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and said Rabboni. Jesus saith unto her touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my father and your father; and he gave her a commission to go to the disciples and tell them that he ascended to his father and their father, to his God and their God. She came to the disciples and said she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things unto her. On the same day, two of the disciples went to Emmaus, a village about three score furlongs from Jerusalem, and as they journeyed they were in conversation about the sad things that had taken place. While they thus talked together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them—but they knew not that it was Jesus; and he asked them what manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad? And one of them said, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days. He asked them what things? And they said concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people—and how the Chief Priest and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him: but we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel—and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done—yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre and found not his body, and came and told us that they had also seen a vision of Angels, and certain of them which were with us went and found it even so as the women had said. Our Saviour then commences and upbraids them, and says, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And begininng at Moses and all the prophets, he explained unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself; and they drew nigh unto the village, and their Divine Master seemed as though he would pass on further. They constrained him to abide with them, as the day was far spent—and he consented and went in to tarry with them. And

it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, that he took bread and blessed it, brake it, and gave to them; then their eyes were opened, and they knew that it was Jesus. And immediately he vanished out of their sight; and one said to the other, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way? Then they arose the same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and coming to the other disciples, said unto them, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. This is taken from the testimony of Luke, found in the 24th chapter of his Gospel, which is a case that John did not seem to notice, confining himself more particularly to the immediate circumstances of his resurrection—having a firm conviction of his own mind that the signs which Jesus did, being thus delivered to his people and to the world, were sufficient for the salvation of all who believe in him, which he assigns as a reason for the revelation of God being written and handed down from generation to generation, that we might have life through his name.

We are now brought to the conclusion, from the testimony of these two disciples, in connection with what Matthew and Mark says in reference to the same interesting circumstances, that every person who will candidly examine the record, will see the resplendent Glory of the Everlasting Father, shining in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, my brethren, we come more closely to examine the verses which we have read as the foundation of this discussion. And may the Lord of Heaven and Earth, direct our minds in the way of all truth; that our reflections may be agreeable to simple truth; that God's name may be glorified, and our souls benefited; that we may be enabled to give Him all the Glory, now and forever—Amen.

I. The first thing that presents itself for our reflection, is the manner in which the disciples were engaged in delivering their messages of Mercy to their fellow creatures. Now for a close observer to notice this, and compare it with the popular preaching of the present day, he cannot but be struck with astonishment to see what a mighty contrast appears. Here is the author of our text and his coadjutors, giving a plain, unvarnished, unsophisticated relation of facts and circumstances, which they continually affirmed by an experimental knowledge of all the signs which Jesus did in their presence, that they were sufficient to convince the world, and to enable men to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God: not forgetting at the same time to have

constant reference to the fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets, which was wonderfully calculated to confirm the truth of their messages, but more especially did they refer to the works of their Master, relating all his miracles in such a manner, as to cause them that heard, to be pierced in their hearts. Witness Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, when he tells that Jesus of Nazareth was approved of God among the Jews by miracles, and that they had with wicked hands, taken, crucified, and slain him. This remark went to the heart of many thousands of the Jews, which caused them to cry out and say, men and brethren, what shall we do. Peter directed them to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of their sins, with the promise that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, assuring them that the promise was to them and their children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Thus they proclaimed the Gospel of the Son of God in such clear, convincing, thundering sermons, that sleepy souls were awakened and brought into an active state of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let the observer compare this mode of preaching with the cold metaphysical preaching of many of our Doctors and Theologians of the present day, who are rigidly following the dogmas of the schools, and he must be struck when he sees the awful contrast between them; he sees on the one hand a plain, humble, unassuming set of preachers, not arrogating to themselves any other authorities and powers than had been given them by their Divine Master—giving to their people a plain and circumstantial account of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, simply telling them that they were his witnesses and that they saw his mighty works performed, and in doing this they often descended to particulars and would give them the history of some leading circumstances, such as his standing by the grave of Lazarus and there weeping like other men, and mingling his tears with the friends of Lazarus—but presently his tears are dried, and in all the majesty and power of God Almighty, who rules the Heavens and the Earth, he is heard with a loud voice to command the dead to arise and come forth—and the disciples testified that they were present and saw the man that had been dead four days come forth, and received command to loose him and let him go.—But more of this in its proper place.

II. We proceed now in the second place to consider the signs which the author of our text refers to in the words under conside-

ration; and first we notice that many divines are of opinion that the signs spoken of by St. John, those which are not written as well as those which are, are to be understood as comprehending all his teaching and his miracles, from his birth to his crucifixion. But we do not think that this is the sense in which we are to understand the Apostle, we believe that he confines his testimony in this place exclusively to those things which were said and done by the Saviour, after his resurrection. Now, with regard to the signs, or things (which John says were numerous,) which are not written, we are not to be very curious to know; no doubt, however, they were things that tended greatly to enlarge the mind of the disciples, and to establish their faith in the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth, and to prepare them for the great duty which they had to discharge, under the commission which they were soon to receive. All this was necessary for the strengthening of the disciples and fixing in their minds the principles of eternal truth, enabling them to preach repentance and remission of sins through his name, confirming their doctrine with miracles and divers operations, emenating from the unity of the Godhead and the manhood in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The signs which are written, more particularly claims our serious attention, as they are the things in which we are interested. Those things have already been noticed in a general point of view—but we have said that the disciples were just about receiving a commission, which is one among the many things which are written. Now in this commission they find their duty defined or explained, so that it was not possible for them to mistake the meaning of their Master. When he says preach the Gospel to every creature, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned—their duty was not only defined or explained, but they were particularly restricted to the publication of the simple Gospel of the Son of God; consequently they were assured that it would be at their own peril, and hazardous in the extreme, (not only to their own souls, but to the souls of their fellow creatures) to introduce any other system of doctrine or teaching, than that which was contained in their commission. Now, my brethren, for us to understand the limitation or restriction of the disciples, as defined in their commission, is perhaps of greater importance than at first view it may seem to be—for I am confident, if this was rightly understood and acted up to, all the religious disputes which have so long agitated the christian world would soon be forgotten in universal love, which would reign in the hearts of

all God's people; but what is the real state of the case? Ah, my brethren, here we are brought to a pause, and while we pause, let us drop a tear or two over the apostacy of the proposed followers of the blessed Jesus. My brethren, while our hearts are somewhat affected with a sense of our defects, let us summon up all our fortitude and march through the midst of flaming firebrands of criticism that are engendering in the embers of a cold philosophy, and kindling at the shrine of human reason, and seize with avidity the little cintulations of truth which are struck off from the fountain of all truth, and bring them to our assistance to clear the mental ray, that we may be able to open the gulfs of superstition and ignorance that has formed a chasm of frightful magnitude, which extends through the long lapse of many centuries; even to the second or third century of the christian era; we have the most indubitable evidence of the fact; but more especially from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, do we see iniquity abounding every where; and even to the time of the reformation, which to some extent restored the ancient order of things. Since that time, however, and even at this moment, the religious world is agitated and torn to pieces by parties, and party spirit are every where engendered, forming themselves into sects or denominations—and in spite of all that Jesus and his disciples had said and done, each faction or party assumed to itself the right of giving laws to the world—(I mean ordinances:)—and instead of attending to the strict principles of the commission of the disciples, and acting accordingly, they looked no farther than to some decision of the fathers, or to the Apostles' creed, or the Augsburgh confession of faith, or the Westminster or some other—or any thing in the world that happened to favour their prejudices. Hence we see that the commission is very little regarded, while the things which are written are overlooked as hardly forming an article in the vocabulary of the theology of the day. This being the case, the effects have run into all the ramifications of society, all orders of people, great and small, rich and poor, free and bond—all, all are more or less under the influence of the bad effects of this deplorable state of things—each one glorying in the thought, that to him and his party is committed the oracles of truth; and what tends greatly to keep these divisions and animosities alive in our world, is this, the leading characters in all those popular parties are continually engaged in giving directions to their people, taking care to square those directions according to their peculiar interests or sentiments, as a people. Thus we see the multitude following their respec-

tive leaders, leaving Saint John and his testimony, and Jesus Christ, with all his miracles, out of the question. This may be questioned by some, but the circumstances of the case are certainly to be taken as evidence—for here are Calvinists and Arminians, and a host of others, all holding to their respective confessions of faith, making them bonds of union and platforms of fellowship. Now I ask to know if the New Testament knows any thing of Calvin's institutes, or of any other human production, as a rule of faith and practice; and I am sure, that every one who has studied the scriptures properly, will join with me in saying that the primitive Church knew no such things, their bond of union being the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets—Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. We should, if we had not been let into the causes which are at work, to produce so many different effects, and there seen the secret springs that move the great wheels of society, been ready to conclude, that the Almighty, in his great mercy, had condescended to favor the caprices of designing men, and granted unto them as many revelations as we see rival sects in our world, and that each had a thus saith the Lord, for his faith and practice; but we thank Heaven for that ray of light which hath run through many centuries, that hath guided the mind of the true worshippers of God, and enabled them to dig from the rubbish of tradition the unadulterated truth, as it is in Jesus. That light, which hath to some extent, lighted the deep caverns of error and corruption, hath shined more abundantly in these latter days, and is now beginning to exert a powerful influence upon the religious world, and promises, ere long, to thoroughly emancipate the enslaved mind from under the shackles of tradition and the inventions of depraved men, and place it under the mild and sovereign reign of grace, when they will fully appreciate the things which are written—remembering that they are written for our instruction, and that they are able to make us wise unto salvation. This we hope for, this we pray for, and this we believe will take place.

Thus we have seen some of the causes which are calculated to destroy, in a very great degree, the good effects which would be produced on the inhabitants of the world, if all these things were done away, and in their stead the Gospel of the Son of God was preached, in its simplicity and purity. And here I would turn a little out of my way, and call on all Ministers, in every department of Christendom, who pretend to teach men the way of life in any way, to look well to the messages you deliver; for remember

that you are set for the defence of the truth; but if you should be found favoring the ideas and doctrines of men, at the expense of the things which are written, you will not only have the mortifying thought at the day of final accounts, that you yourselves have been giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, but that scores of your fellow creatures will, through your instrumentality, be hurled from the presence of God and the Lamb forever. Seeing then the awful responsibility that rests upon us, let us labor to present nothing but such things as are written in the volume of inspiration, which is alone able to make us wise unto salvation. Thus we shall save our own souls alive, and the souls of them that hear us; and God will add the increase daily to such labors, as shall be performed in this spirit—and wil build up his Church, until it shall become a praise in all the Earth.

In the next place, we see in the definition of the commission of the Apostles, certain directions given, with regard to their mode of establishing the kingdom of their Master, which was altogether distinct from the world, and was composed of subjects that were prepared as living materials, by and through the instrumentality of the preaching of the Apostles, who received their instructions from the living oracles—telling them none other things but such things as they heard and seen. And when the people gave proof of repentance toward God and faith in Christ Jesus, they were then instructed to baptize them, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.—(I mean by this they were immersed, believers, every one of them.) The Apostles then taught them to observe all things which they had heard from the beginning. And thus they continued steadfast in the Apostle's doctrine, in breaking bread and in prayers—all enjoying the love of God in simplicity, being of one faith, speaking the same things, joined together in the same judgment, showing forth the praises of him that had begotten them again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Here we see the blessed fruits of one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism. Now compare this state of things with that which now exists in our world, and who cannot see that the state of the religious world is not what it should be: for instead of one faith we have many, instead of one Lord we have Lords many and Gods many, instead of one Baptism we have three or four, and a host of other idle ceremonies which have no foundation in truth, but have originated in the pride and prejudice of the human heart, and are urged upon the world with an air of sanctity, claiming to be the sacred commands of Christ Jesus, or at least

tantamount to them. Now an individual need go no farther to satisfy himself with regard to the truth of this remark, than to the different sectaries of our own country—there he will see it fully demonstrated, in creeds and confessions of faith—no two exactly agreeing in all points, and all urging their claims upon men's consciences, upon the ground of the propriety and expediency of their peculiar views and sentiments, while the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets is wholly or in part overlooked or forgotten, forming but a very small part of the articles of their faith. Thus we see the religion of the present day is not precisely such as was established at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, nor even that which was professed and practised by Polycarp and his brethren. Ignatius, and the whole Church at Antioch, together with all, who, in those days called on the name of the Lord, out of a pure heart, but savors and seems to be somewhat allied to the religion of the thirteenth century, when the Virgin, the Lamb's wife, the Church of Christ, was secreted in the wilderness, and there nourished and kept a time, and times, and half a time; while, on the other hand, the religion of the world, or worldly religion, which had become the power of the beast, was the order of the day. Let all who wish the cause of Christ well, look to this and be astonished and confounded, and fall down before God and weep, and mourn over the desolations of Zion—and then arise and throw off the shackles of a worldly policy, and rally back to the blood-stained cross of the Redeemer, as it is exhibited to us in the things which are written; this should be the constant effort of every christian that is now living on the face of the earth. Brethren, for this we hope, for this we pray, and this we believe will take place.

III. In the third place, we proceed to notice the design of our Heavenly Father, in giving us a revellation of his will, and so ordering and arranging his merciful Providence, as to cause that revelation to be written and contained in that volume called the Bible. And here, my brethren, let us, on entering upon this part of our subject, stop at the very threshhold, and wonder and be astonished. and lose ourselves in admiration and silent praise—while we are permitted to look into the deep designs of God, in mercifully making known to us the good pleasure of his will, and causing his spirit to bear witness with ours that we are his children.

The design of our Heavenly Father, in revealing his will to us, is of a two-fold nature.—First, his own glory: second, the happiness of his creatures. Now that God is glorified in the whole of this transaction, we are abundantly satisfied, from the whole testi-

mony of the scriptures—for we are there taught that this design did not originate in the infinite mind of the Deity just at the time when man became rebellious, nor did it originate in his mind at any subsequent period—for if this had been the case, there would be an impropriety in the testimony of scripture, in constantly asserting that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. We must, therefore, look to the invisible and incomprehensible God: for in the boundless ocean of his love alone can this glorious design be found: and in glorifying himself, he has been pleased to connect the happiness of his creatures; consequently, all the boundless stores of wisdom and mercy, and all the means of grace are and were eternally treasured up in him, and in time were revealed to the children of men, and are contained in the living oracles, and are written that we might believe. In the execution of this design, it became necessary for God, the Everlasting Father, to send his beloved Son into our world, suffering him to be born of a woman made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Thus, in pursuance of his glorious design, he presented his adorable Son, in human flesh, before the higher orders of his intelligences, and said, let all the Angels of God worship him.—This struck the Holy Angels with wonder, and filled them with praise, to see the deep and merciful design of their Divine Creator thus beginning to be developed; consequently, they desired to look into it, but were not able, not being the objects to which this design was specifically directed, they only being engaged as agents in the hand of their Divine Creator, in the further execution of his merciful designs in saving sinners. This brings us to the conclusion, that in all things pertaining to the merciful design of God, in making a revelation of his will to men, he is abundantly glorified. And shall the object of this design be defeated?—shall not God be glorified in all his works? Most assuredly—for if every other principle and ever other thing in the universe of God was annihilated, such is the equity, such the justice of the principles upon which this design is predicated, that it alone would be found centred in the everlasting love of our Heavenly Father—vieing with eternity, and claiming the adoration and praise of all inferior beings. So much, we say, at present, in reference to the glory which is ascribed to the name of our God, in consequence of a developement of his merciful design, manifested in procuring the life and salvation of offending sinners.

We now turn our eyes again to this boundless ocean of the love of God, and behold we see our own happiness identified with his

glory; and in the further execution of his design, we see our elder brother, Jesus Christ, the righteous, according to the stipulations of the covenant of grace, flowing out from the eternal designs of God, coming into our world and taking upon him the form of a servant, and is found in fashion as a man—submitting himself to all the privations of human life—enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself—living a life of sorrow—dying a bitter death, all for the purpose of reconciling sinners to the merciful designs of God in their salvation and eternal happiness:—rising from the dead, bringing life and immortality to light, through the Gospel.

But let us be more definite in our remarks: we have said that God had connected our happiness with his glory, consequently it became necessary for the world to be enlightened upon the great things of eternity, for the world had sinned and come short of the glory of God, consequently was in a state of moral death, blindness, and superstition: and unless God had eternally designed by an act of sovereign grace, to give the most unequivocal testimony of his love, they must forever perish. That testimony, however, is given in the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth. Let us demonstrate it by a reference to a few facts: in doing this, we notice the Spirit of Jesus speaking in the Prophets, foretelling certain events that were to take place, just before, at the time, and after his birth, we shall only notice a few of them. By a reference to the predictions of Isiah, you see that he speaks of one coming as a voice in the wilderness, crying, repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand: prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight a way in the desert for our God. Now turn to the testimony of the Evangelists, and there you will see John the Baptist as the fore-runner of our Saviour, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, telling them that the Messiah was speedly to appear. Thus we see the prophecy fulfilled to the very letter. Another circumstance we notice is this: It had been said by the Prophets, that when Messiah came, there would be universal peace throughout the world. So we see at the birth of our Saviour, the Temple of Jannus was shut, which was not the case while war was waged among any of the inhabitants of the known world. Again it was said by David, why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, saying, let us cast their cords from us and burst their bands asunder. Again it was said by the prophets in Ramah, there was mourning and lamentation—Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not. Now let us see the fulfilment. In the days of

Herod the King, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. This troubled Herod and all Jerusalem with him, and immediately he sent forth his executioners throughout Bethlehem, and all the coasts thereof, and slew all the male children, from two years old and under. And this circumstance was noted by the Evangelist, as literal fulfilment of the predictions of Jeremiah. These, together with many other circumstances and coincidences, are accurately noted by the four Evangelists, as comprehending one part of the glorious design of our Heavenly Father, in connecting our happiness with his glory. But it does not stop here, for there must be evidence on the part of Jesus himself, establishing his divine mission, which could not be given by or through any other instrumentality. This is seen—first, in his miraculous conception and birth—second, in his extraordinary wisdom at the age of twelve years—next, in his submitting himself to the ordinance of baptism, and entering upon his public ministry. We now see him giving a more full display of the glory of the eternal design of God the Father, than had ever been seen from the foundation of the world, until the Saviour appeared. Here we see him as God, casting out devils, healing diseases, raising the dead to life again, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin: as man, being touched with the feeling of our infirmities, bearing our sins in his own body, that by his stripes we might be healed. Let us take notice of some of these interesting circumstances. Permit me to remark here, however, that in all these instances, there is an evidence of a two-fold character in the eternal design of God, manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus, that is to establish his divine and human characters. We have already referred, in a partial manner, to some of the incidents, particularly that of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead; we said, on that occasion, that Jesus mingled his tears with the tears of the friends of the deceased. Here was humanity touched by sympathy, in all the finest of its sensibilities, insomuch that the Jews were astonished, and said, behold how he loved him. But that they might have the most tangible evidence of his divinity, he, by one single act of divine power, commanded the dead and he arose and came forth, to the astonishment of many of the Jews.

Take another case, that of Jesus and his disciples crossing the sea of Gallilee or Tiberius—when the storm came down upon them, we see disciples rowing hard, striving against the winds and

the waters, that which threatened their destruction; but Jesus himself is fast asleep as other men sleep. The disciples, in their great distress, came to their master, and finding him asleep, they awoke him, and as a man he awoke from sleep, but as a God he rebuked the winds and the seas, and they obeyed him. Thus the raging elements trembled and sunk down into a great calm, at the voice of their Creator. Take another case, that of the Saviour's going through Samaria, and coming to the well that was called Jacob's well—here we see him sitting on the well wearied with his journey, looking like an eastern traveller. But when the woman of Samaria came to draw water, as God, he told her all things that ever she did. Is not this the Christ?

We notice one more, among other cases, that might be brought to bear on this point, that is, the circumstance of our Saviour riding into Jerusalem. When he had gone as far as the descent of the mount of Olives, he lifted up his eyes and looked over the city and wept like another man, but like a God he foretold all the desolations that should come upon the inhabitants of that city and the Jewish nation in general. Thus we might go on to enumerate cases almost without number, were the divinity and humanity of our Saviour are clearly established—showing the glorious design of our Heavenly Father, in connecting our happiness with his glory. But we think enough has been said to satisfy our minds, that the things which are written relating to things which occured before the crucifixion of our Saviour, as well as after his resurrection, are sufficient to convince the most sceptical mind, of the truth of the christian religion, and bring him to acknowledge the divinity of the written word, and to look no longer upon it as a dead letter, but to see that it is quick and powerful, dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In the next place, we shall take notice of that faith which the scriptures every where insist upon. And first, let us endeavor to explain the nature of it:

I. Let this definition be carefully remarked, and let this be kept in view, though the faith of which we are speaking has not a certainty resting on the evidence of the senses, or on the conclusions of right reason, it has a certainty perfect in its kind, that which rests on a testimony worthy of credit. In order to comprehend it fully, it is necessary to distinguish two species of evidence, evidence of the object and evidence of testimony.

We call evidence of the object, that which rests either on the

deposition of our senses or on the discernment of sound reason. I believe that you are now assembled within the circumference of these walls—I believe it because I see it; so the evidence which I have on this subject, is that species of evidence which I have denominated evidence of the object, and which is founded on the deposition of the senses, and so of all the rest. But if there be evidence of object, there is likewise evidence of testimony. I believe there is such a place as Liverpool, or Paris—I have evidence to support this belief: not the evidence of object, but the evidence of testimony. I believe there are such places, though I have never seen them with my own eyes—but there is such a cloud of witnesses who assure me of it, that the evidence of testimony supplies the evidence of object; so in all similar cases. Having thus explained our idea of the nature of testimony, we say that the christian believes what he seeth not. We do not by this understand that he believeth in what is destitute of proof, we only mean that he believeth the truth of facts, of which he has not been an eye witness—that he believeth in truths which he could not have discovered by his own reason, and that he hopes for a felicity of which he has not a distinct idea; but he believes those facts on the unanimous testimony of a great number of witnesses, who could not possibly have acted in concert to deceive him; he believes those truths on an infallible testimony, namely, on the word of God himself. In all these things the evidence of testimony supplies the evidence of object; that it is of this kind of faith we are to understand these words in our text, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name. First, the faith of which we speak must be carefully distinguished from the faith which is extorted by tyranny. We do not here understand that which violence would attempt to produce, by the terror of punishment. Never did racks, gibbets and stakes, produce in the soul any thing like conviction in favor of a religion which pretended to establish itself by argument so odious and detestable. But there is a tyranny of a different kind which has produced believers, not a few, by dint of attesting fictitious men, have forced them into credit by dint of insolent pretensions, to infalibility. The simple have sometimes been prevailed upon to admit it, and the simple generally constitute the bulk of mankind. We denounce that the faith extorted by tyranny, which is yielded to the insolent decisions of a doctor, who gives himself out as infallible without proving it, or to fabulous legends, unsupported by any respectable testimony.

We say that there are things that are more or less working themselves into all the ramifications of society, and commanding implicit obedience, binding men's consciences to certain rules which their caprices think proper to dictate; and if I should refuse to receive their opinions as infallible and shape my course accordingly, I am taxed with incredulity, like Thomas—and with saying, as he did, except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe. If you would have me believe the facts which you propose, produce me the proofs which support them, for without testimony I cannot believe.

II. In the second place, the faith of which we are treating must be distinguished from that of the enthusiast. I mean that of certain christians who found the reasons which induce them to believe entirely on such and such impulses, which they pretend to be the operation of the spirit of God—impulses destitute of illumination, and which determine the person thus agitated to yield his assent to a proposition unsupported by proof, or, at most, recommended by an air of probability. One of the marks which distinguish false zeal from true, is, that this last, I mean true zeal sacrifices its own glory to that of religion, and is infinitely better pleased to acknowledge its own error, than to spread the slightest cloud over that pure and genial light, in which religion is arrayed; a man, on the contrary, who is actuated by a false zeal, sacrifices, without hesitation, the glory of religion to his own, and maintains, at the expense of truth itself, the errors which he has advanced. This has been found to be the case with certain eminent names, on the subject of our present discussion; the vehemence of the controversies which have been carried on, respecting the operation of the Holy Spirit, which operates in the faithful, has caused them to run into extremes on both sides of the question, each maintaining their original grounds, to the injury of the cause they profess to support and love, in the heat of argument. They have asserted, that the action of the Holy Spirit, which operates in the faithful, is carried so far as to give them a degree of faith, superior to the reasons which they have for believing, when pressed by their adversaries; they ought to have acknowledged this to be one of the propositions which one is tempted to advance in the heat of dispute, and which candor, without hesitation, is disposed to retract after the heat has subsided, but this in general is too great a sacrifice for self-love to make. O self-love, monster of the human heart.

Thus, in order to support one absurdity, a still greater absurdity has been advanced. It has been maintained, not only that the following proposition is true, namely, the impulse of the spirit gives us a faith superior to the reasons which we have for believing, but this is absolutely necessary, for it has been alleged that the christian religion, being destitute of proofs which enforce assent, all those who should refuse to sssent or believe what is destitute of this kind of proof, must, in so doing, refuse to believe the christian religion.

God forbid that we should attempt to defend, with weapons so empoisoned, the truth of religion; it was not thus that they were defended by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, they called on men to believe, but they, at the same time, adduced proof of what they wished to be received as the object of faith. The spirit of God undoubtedly operates on the soul of every one who implores his assistance, but it is by making them feel the force of the proofs, not by convincing them of what it is impossible to prove—and who could be condemned for not having believed mere christianity destitute of sufficient proof: would not the infidel be warranted in alledging, I am not to blame if I withhold my assent to such a proposition?—I do not feel that impulse which engages one to believe what cannot be proved? But the notion which we have given of faith confounds every one who refuses to believe; we say, with Jesus Christ, of the unbelievers of his time, this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.—*John*, iii, 19.

Finally, my brethren, we distinguish the faith of the Gospel which is founded on facts, from that kind of faith or belief, which causes me to believe a truth completely proven: but without having examined the proofs which support it, is to have the faith of superstition, a truth of which I perceive not the proof, is no truth to me. What renders me acceptable in the sight of God, when I receive what he is pleased to reveal to me as an intelligent being, after having weighed the motives which induced me to give it welcome, after having discovered on putting them in the balance with the opposite motives, that the first had greatly the preponderancy over the others; but to believe a truth with precipitation to believe it without knowledge is mere superstition, and places the individual upon uncertain ground and all his hopes upon contingencies, which is liable every moment to plunge him into error that will lead him down to the chambers of eternal night, there to remember his folly forever.

We shall now endeavor to speak of the excellency of the faith of the gospel of the Son of God, and first in general terms it is a firm belief of the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, which contains the revealed will of God, being a transcript of his moral perfections, and is given to man as a rule of faith and practice. This testimony is given or presented to the mind through the instrumentality of the preaching of the word, attended by power and demonstration of the spirit, and when the mind is sufficiently informed of all the facts and circumstances in connection with the birth. life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, then it gives its assent to all the propositions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: then commences that faith in the soul which enables him to believe that God is, and that he is, a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him. Thus the soul seeks to the living oracles, and the more he examines them the clearer does he see that his salvation is all of grace, and the more confident is he that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; thus believing, he begins to square his actions according to what he sees in the written word, and begins to have his fellowship with the Apostles, with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. This faith is the effect of divine testimony, consequently is divine faith exercised upon a divine object, and all is the free gift of God. Now to suppose that an individual could exercise this faith abstractly from the testimony of God, (I mean the Bible) would be to suppose an impossibility, for how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?—*Romans*, x., 14. Here you perceive the difference between this faith and a mere speculative faith; or as we have already said, a faith extorted by tyranny, or a superstitious faith, or an enthusiastic faith, all these having originated in the depravity of the human heart, have a tendency to increase the stupidity of the soul and settle it on another foundation, a foundation which has been laid by the wisdom of men, whose wisdom and prudence are an abomination to God, and from whose eyes the glorious things of the kingdom are forever hid, and are revealed unto babes, even to those who exercise faith in Jesus as the Son of God, who walk according to his commands and keep his sayings, rejoicing in God their Saviour. Now for us to suppose that a man, or for a man to flatter himself that he is a believer in Jesus Christ, and not do what Jesus commands his disciples to do, would be to suppose that an effect can exist without a cause, which no reasonable man will contend for. We

then come to the conclusion, that no one need be deceived on this ground, for if a man pretends to be religious and does not follow the command of Jesus of Nazareth, he only deceiveth himself and the truth is not in him, but whoever does the things which are according to truth by a proper exercise of faith in the testimony of God, has every thing to assure him that he is accepted in the beloved, and shall be saved in Heaven. But let us for a moment take notice of its effects upon the individual, while he is doomed to remain here in this probationary state of existence, he is humble, he is meek, he is spiritual—in a word, he is throughly furnished unto all good works—willingly submitting himself to the reign of grace—entering into the spirit of the things which are written—believing them in his very heart—growing up into the word of God—at the same time laying aside all malice and all guile as a new born babe, he desires the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby. This faith then being the effect of divine testimony, (for without testimony no faith can be exercised,) is that principle in the soul which is called the divine nature, producing that holiness of heart, without which, no man shall see the Lord. This then being a point which none will deny, how vain is it for men to dispute about the operations of God's Spirit on the soul of man. In producing this change, (I mean the particular *modus operandi*,) by which this change is effected, sufficient it is for us to look to the things which are written, and then learn our duty, and the things which are not written, we should not be curious to know, as revealed things belong to us and our children are hidden things to God, consequently it is not for us to say, how much importance God is pleased to attach to the obedience of faith, in accomplishing his designs in the salvation of his people, for we see in all cases he made it necessary, and have given proofs the most satisfactory, that he would always bless the obedient soul, and would accomplish that in him which would enable him to rejoice in him as the God of his salvation. It is certainly God's province to give command, and it is as certain our duty to obey, for we are God's property—he has created us, and we not ourselves; therefore, he has a right to command, and we are not to question the propriety or the impropriety of any of his commands, but are in duty bound to obey. Now as before remarked, we are not to say how much is effected by our obedience to God's commands; but we are abundantly encouraged by many examples which are before us, both in the Old and New Testaments. Take a few of those examples—see Moses at God's command, when he speaks to him out of the burn-

ing bush, throwing down his rod and instantly it became a serpent; and again he commands him to stretch forth his hand and take hold upon the serpent, and it became a rod in his hand. Now we do not pretend to say how much of this miracle was accomplished by Moses. Sufficient for our purpose it is to know that if Moses had not obeyed God, the miracle would not have been wrought, for God works by means. Take another case: when God commands Moses and Aaron to go to Pharoah, and to say, let my people go that they may serve me; God on that occasion adds to their obedience miraculous powers, so that wonders were performed by them, to the confounding of the Astrologers and all the Egyptians with them, so that they acknowledged the finger of God was with Moses, (viz:) the power of God. Now let us suppose for argument sake, that Moses had disobeyed God on this occasion, would these wonders have been performed—would the rods of the magicians have been swallowed up by Moses' rod—would the lice and the frogs have come at his command to infest and annoy the whole land? Nay further, would the Angel of Death have been sent forth to destroy the first born of Egypt; in a word, would the Israelites have been preserved in the midst of death and judgment, and delivered from bondage, and conducted through the red sea, and preserved in the wilderness thirty-eight or forty years, and then ushered into the promised land? No, brethren, God works by means, and those were the means which he designed to effect these great things—so that obedience in all these things were actually necessary to accomplish the will of God. We do not pretend to limit God to the use of means to effect his purposes, but he cannot act inconsistent with his will. Take another case: when God commanded the children of Israel, through the instrumentality of Moses, to look upon the brazen serpent, when they were bitten by a fiery serpent, they looked and lived. But suppose they had disobeyed the command of God, what would have been the consequence—would they have lived? Every one says no! Thus we see how their faith wrought with their works, in extracting the poisonous fluid that was injected into their bodies by the stings of the fiery serpents. God works by means. We take notice of a few more among many cases in the Old Testament, which bears directly on the point. See the case of Joshua conducting the children of Israel over Jordan, landing, or rather ascending the opposite shore in the vicinity of the town of Jerico; and then and there receiving a special command from God, in reference to his movements as commander-in-chief of the army of Israel—see

the specification—he is ordered to send the Priests and Levites to encompass the city seven days, and to sound ram's horns as a signal for victory, and on the seventh day they were to encompass it seven times, sounding ram's horns all the while—and when the people was commanded to shout, the walls of the city fell, and they obtained the victory. Now let us suppose Joshua countermanding all the orders of the Almighty, and introducing in their stead his own will and his own view of propriety, not regarding the sacred command of God, and sure am I, that they might have sounded ram's horns till this day, and the walls of the city would have remained—so we see that obedience, when offered in faith, effects something which is of great importance. Look at Abraham, when he is commanded to offer up his beloved Isaac: it is said that he was justified by works. But did not faith accompany his works? Most assuredly. But let us suppose that Abraham had disobeyed God and refused to offer up Isaac, would he ever have been called the friend of God? Would he ever have been called the father of the faithful? Would he ever have inherited the promises? Most assuredly not! Then obedience, when offered in faith, is of the first importance. We notice another case which is full of interest, it is the case of Shadrac, Meshec and Abednego, three of the servants of God, who, for their obedience to the divine law, and opposition to an idol, was brought and accused before the King and sentenced to be thrown into a fiery furnace, and were there supernaturally preserved. Faith and obedience then wrought together in producing this wonderful deliverance, and so it does in all who are exercised by it. My brethren, do we not begin to see that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams? See again, when Elijah, the Prophet, was commanded to go to Ahab, the King, and there to build an Altar to the Lord God, and offer a burnt offering upon it. God was pleased on that occasion to answer the prayer of his servant, and to send down fire from Heaven and consume the sacrifice, to the astonishment and confounding of all the Prophets of Baal, together with all the Jews who were present on that occasion.

Now let us suppose that Elijah refuses to obey, in all this matter, the specific command of his God, and shall we hear the multitude crying out the Lord he is God, the Lord he is God. No brethren, we shall see the Prophets of Baal triumphing over the Prophet of God, and laughing him to scorn; but we see that by his faith and obedience, the very reverse of all this was the case. God works by means. We take one more Old Testament cases,

that of Naaman the Syrean who was a Leper, he being told by a female captive of the Hebrews, that there was a man of God who dwelt in the land of Israel that could cure him; he was induced to go and see the man—but when he came, the man of God simply told him to go and dip himself seven times in Jordan. Naaman is at once angry at the man of God, and said, are not the waters of Pharper and Abanna rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? why may I not dip in them and be clean? The servant of Naaman at length began to reason with him, and asked him if the man of God had told him to do some great thing, if he would not have done it; or, if the man of God had come out and offered sacrifices and invoked the gods, if he would not have believed; but because he simply told him to go and dip himself seven times in Jordan, he would not do it. At length, however, he concluded to obey the prophet, and went and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and was healed. Now, suppose ye, my hearers, that if this man had, as many do in the present day, partly obeyed and partly disobeyed, making a compromise with positive commands, and had said, it is useless to dip myself so often—I will only dip myself three or four or five or six times, as the case might be, think you he would have been healed? or, suppose he had said, the man of God commanded me to dip myself seven times, but I will pay no regard to the number of times which he has stated, I will dip myself fourteen times, and he goes on and does it, will he be healed? No, my brethren, he will come out of the water with the leprosy cleaving fast to him, perhaps, never to be healed; but, when he follows the command, and does precisely what he is ordered to do, he is healed; and so is every one who does conscienciously offer to God the obedience of faith, submitting to the commands of God as they are laid down in his written word; and in all these cases, and thousands of other similar cases, we might show the effect of disobedience in the slightest degree, if this is true, and true it is, as certain as God is true. How awfully miserable is the situation of thousands of our fellow creatures, who, notwithstanding they read the command and understand its import, yet they will not encompass the city of Jerico round about seven days; neither will they on the seventh day encompass it round seven times, but will follow some idle ceremony of man's invention to their ruin, saying with Naaman, are not the waters of Damascus better than the waters of Israel?

Let us now examine some New Testament cases, and see if we cannotestablish our proposition, that obedience to the command

of Christ is essential to our well being. And here I would remark, that to believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, is the ground of our obedience to his laws. Thus in all cases where obedience is rewarded, it is done in reference to the faith of individuals—thus we see our Saviour commending the faith of the woman who touched the hem of his garment, assuring her that her faith had made her whole; and of others under similar circumstances, especially that of the poor man who was borne by four, and let down through the tiling of the house, he seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, thy sins are forgiven thee. Also the case of the man at the pool of Bethesda: here we see an individual doing all in his power to obtain a cure—Jesus looks upon him with compassion, asking him if he would be made whole, and then healed him; so of all the rest, the cases that we further notice, are found to be somewhat different in their nature, having occurred under something of different circumstances. We notice the obedience of the faith of the disciples of our Lord; they obeyed in all things, and was rewarded in this life with sustaining grace, and in the world to come life everlasting. But let us see how faith and duty are connected with everlasting life: for remember the words of our text, and that believing we might have life through his name. Here we see the great necessity of our faith and practice, being regulated by the written word, and that in every particular, for we must remember that Naaman was told to dip himself seven times in Jordan, no more nor no less would answer—and that Joshua commanded the Priests and Levites to encompass the city of Jerico seven times, on the seventh day, and that no other means would answer. Now, my hearers, Jesus Christ has given us just as explicit orders as were these, by obeying them as they did, we shall as certainly be blessed as they were—but if we are self-willed in the smallest matter, it is dangerous in the extreme, and will end in our eternal overthrow. The command which our Saviour has given, is to repent, believe, and be baptized, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Now, in giving his disciples this command, did our Saviour mean what he said? If he did, which I am persuaded none will deny, then not a living soul in our world having arrived at the age of moral discretion, possessing a rational soul, can expect to be saved in any other way than by believing and following his command in all things. As well might we suppose that the children of Israel would have been healed without looking to the brazen serpent, when they were stung by a fiery serpent, as to suppose any such

thing; it would be contrary to every principle of justice, and every example in the scriptures; consequently, it is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall inherit the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father. Now, under these circumstances, how vain it is in any man to suppose that God has given us specific directions, and that we are, at the same time, at liberty to follow his orders or our own prejudices. Remember this is not dipping ourselves seven times in Jordan, but is saying the waters of Damascus are better. We have already said that our Lord commands us to believe and be baptized—(I mean by this, believe and be immersed). But we see what a difference of sentiment exists on this subject: some tells us that a drop of water is as good as a fountain; but the Priests and Levites had to encompass the city seven days, and on the seventh day seven times, constantly sounding ram's horns before the walls of Jerico fell. Remember, man, God will have his commands obeyed and respected. Others again tells us that these are only modes, and that it is quite indifferent to what mode a man submits himself, provided there is an application of water in some way. Remember Naaman was commanded to dip himself seven times, and he done it and was healed—the reason was, he done precisely as he was directed. And now, my friends, if you wish to enjoy any thing of the obedience of faith, go and do likewise.

Permit us to remark just here, that there is an idea abroad in our world that has slain its thousands, and is daily carrying multitudes of our fellow creatures down to the chambers of eternal night. That idea, perhaps, is the most specious idea that could possibly have originated in the mind, and sets at nought the counsels of Heaven, and more effectually secures the ruin of the soul, than any other that has ever existed, and serves to keep up strifes, heart-burnings, and bickerings among the professed people of God. That idea is this, says the individual, it is quite indifferent to what I submit myself, as to Church ordinances, provided I am sincere in my pretensions to religion, and religious exercises. My hearers, let us try this by the test of divine truth for a moment and I think we shall see that it will crumble to dust in our hands, before the engine of truth. First let us ask the question: did ever sincerity save any man? If it did, I should be in conscience bound to believe that the worshippers of Jaugernaut are all saved, for they are all sincerity, even to falling down and being crushed to death, before the wheels of the car. Again it is possible for a man to be very sincere in an error that is highly destructive, even in a

christian land. I may say, for instance, that I am sincere in maintaining that the scriptures are not the word of God—that they are all a fable, and have no foundation in truth, and yet I am sincere in all this. Again, closely allied to this is that sophism which teaches men, that whatever is not directly prohibited in scripture, is and must be right. Well, on this ground, there is no direct prohibition in the scriptures, that I shall not acknowledge—my hearers, as christians, therefore, it is right to do so.

Thus we see the falicy of all these sophisms, that they have no foundation in the truth, but are only the inventions of men, and have not a thus saith the Lord to them; so we see from all these examples, and many others, which might have been brought forward, that our faith and practice does not arise from what is not clearly expressed, but from what is. And happy is that soul who does as Naaman, or Joshua and the children of Israel did, for he, and he only, shall find the blessing which they did. While others who satisfy themselves with their folly, shall die in their own deceivings, and be forever miserable, remembering that they have set at naught the cause of God, and exercised their own rebellious wills to their eternal ruin.

Finally, in the last place, we shall recapitulate the whole subject, and make such an application of it as the Lord may direct.

We have seen in the first place, in the course of this discussion, the establishment of Christianity in the days of the Apostles, when there was one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism; and we have seen the blessed fruits of such a state of things; we have also seen, in after days, the apostacy of the Church, and its dreadful consequences on society; we have seen too the causes, or some of the causes, which produce this divided state of things; we have also discovered the means by which this distracted and divided state of things may be done away, and the ancient order of things restored; also the design of God in making a revelation of his will to man, and the connection that exists in the merciful arrangement of God, between his glory and our happiness; in the last place, we have seen the nature of the faith which the scriptures every where insist upon and recognise, that it is a faith founded on facts, consequently, is to be carefully distinguished from the faith extorted by tyranny, or an enthusiastic faith, or a superstitious belief, or any thing of the kind. This faith is the only thing in the world that can enable us to offer an acceptable service to God, or to honor his commands, for without this faith it is impossible to please him.

Now, my hearers, who of us are prepared to stem the torrent of criticism. and rise above the cold philosophy of the day, and seize the helm of divine truth and march forward in the good cause of our God, putting down all human system, consisting in those things which have usurped the place of the written word, and are laid down as bonds of union and platforms of fellowship, causing party spirit and party feeling to exist to an alarming degree in our world. Here they are tearing the very vitals of the Church of Christ, and we seem to be unconscious of it. My brethren, let us awake to our duty, and let us look around and see the desolations of Zion, and let us rally back to the standard of divine truth, and let us embrace it in our hearts, and clasp it in our hands, and present it before the world, as we find it in the things which are written, and then party spirit and party feeling will be done away forever, and all creeds and confessions of faith will be lost, and the Bible alone will be the bond of union between all Christians, and will then, and not till then, exert a proper influence upon the world. Now, who among us does not desire such a glorious reformation? If we have these good desires, we will endeavor to extricate ourselves from all the rubbish of past ages, and gird on the armour of light and truth, that we may be in some measure instrumental in God's hands, in bringing about the glorious millenium of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you ask in your heart what you can do in this great work? I answer, you can do a great deal—you can pray to God for assistance, and that assistance will be granted you—then you can begin to hold to a sound form of words, speaking none other things than such things as are written and contained in the living oracles, and will learn to avoid all the mistifications of men; and by these means one will be able to put a thousand to silence and ten thousand to flight, for truth is powerful and must prevail. So, my hearers, you see we are to move forward in the good cause of our God, for we shall reap, if we faint not; and, further, if we would be instrumental in propelling the good cause of our God, let us cultivate a spirit of brotherly love and affection with all men, especially with the household of faith. Now I appeal to every Christian heart, in the sound of my voice, and to all the world, and ask the question, if any thing else can bring about this glorious state of things? Can the philosophy of the schools do it? No, brethren! Can the divided efforts of Sectarianism do it? No, this cannot do it! Can the partial amalgamation or mingling together of the sects do it? No, not even

this can do it, for it has been sufficiently tried, and it is found that each one is tenaciously bound to support his own particular dogmas, though he does, to some extent, mingle with others. So you see that until every human tradition is put away, and the living oracles, the blessed Bible is taken by all parties, as a rule of faith and practice, in all things pertaining to godliness, there is no ground to hope that the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be rightly appreciated by the world; but, brethren, we believe that the time is not far distant, for who cannot see that the disciples are beginning to be feelingly alive to the interests of the Kingdom of their Master, and have already sounded the alarm, and are girding on the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left, prepared to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life. whereunto they are also called, remembering that they have also witnessed a good profession before many witnesses.

My brethren, while these glorious things are being achieved, I urge it upon you by every thing that is sacred, as a duty which you owe to your God, to yourselves, to your children, and your fellow creatures in general, that you, from this good hour set out in all the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in all the affection of the spirit of our God, to do the things which are written and contained in the volume of eternal truth; that by believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ the Son of the living God, ye might have life through his name—then we shall see a new era in the history of the Church of Christ, or rather we shall see the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, again exhibited in one Faith, one Lord, and one Baptism, one God over all and blessed, forever more, &c. &c.

Permit me, my brethren, in the close of these exercises, to remind you of the infinite amount of obligation under which you are placed to your Divine Redeemer, to be actively engaged, to spread the word of eternal life throughout the whole world, so that all may read in their own tongue wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. May the Lord incline our hearts thus to engage in his service in this world, and finally save us in Heaven, is the prayer of your servant in the bonds of Christ—Amen.